

CLAIMS

We Claim:

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1. A surgical instrument for treating female urinary stress incontinence comprising:
- a) a tape for implanting into the lower abdomen of a female to provide support to the urethra comprising adjusting means for adjusting the tape after implantation; and
- b) a curved needle-like element defining in part a curved shaft having a distal end and a proximal end, and means for attaching to the tape.
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2. The surgical instrument of claim 1 wherein the adjusting means is an expandable chamber.
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3. The surgical instrument of claim 1 wherein the adjusting means is a suture-like element that passes through the tape, whereby when the suture element is tightened, the tape provides additional support to the urethra.
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4. A surgical instrument for treating female urinary stress incontinence comprising a tape for implanting into the lower abdomen of a female to provide support to the urethra, the tape defining a first end and a second end and an expandable chamber for accepting a bulking agent.
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5. A method for treating female urinary incontinence comprising the steps of:
- a) providing a first and second curved needle-like element, each defining a curved shaft having a distal end and a proximal end, and a tape attached to both needle elements, the tape comprising an expandable container for receiving a bulking agent;
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- b) passing the first needle and tape into the body via the vagina and on one side of the urethra and extending the tape over the pubic bone and through the abdomen wall;
- c) passing the second needle and tape into the body via the vagina and on the opposite side of the urethra than the first needle and extending the tape over the pubic bone and through the abdomen wall, creating a supporting sling below the urethra;
- d) leaving the tape implanted in the body; and
- e) injecting a bulking agent into the expandable container.

6. A method for treating female urinary incontinence comprising the steps of:
- a) providing a curved needle-like element defining in part a curved shaft having a distal end and a proximal end and a tape comprising attached thereto, the tape further comprising means for adjusting the tape; and
- b) passing the needle and tape into the body via the vagina to form a sling around the urethra;
- c) leaving the tape implanted in the body; and
- d) adjusting the tape using the adjusting means.

7. A method for treating female urinary incontinence comprising the steps of:
- a) providing a curved needle-like element defining in part a curved shaft;
- b) attaching a tape to the needle;
- c) passing the needle and tape into the body;
- d) attaching the tape to the needle and passing the needle and tape into the body to form a sling around the urethra;
- e) leaving the tape implanted in the body; and
- f) adjusting the tape after implantation.

8. A method for treating female urinary incontinence comprising the steps of:

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- g) providing a curved needle-like element defining in part a curved shaft;
 - h) attaching a tape to the needle;
 - i) passing the needle and tape into the body;
 - j) attaching the tape to the needle and passing the needle and tape into
the body to form a sling around the urethra;
 - k) leaving the tape implanted in the body; and
 - l) injecting a bulking agent between the tape and urethra.
9. A device for supporting internal anatomical structure comprising a mesh tape
and an expandable chamber having the ability to contain a variable amount of
a bulking agent wherein the expandable chamber is affixed to the mesh tape
and positioned between the mesh tape and anatomical structure.
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